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ABSTRACT

In the past few years, the care and education dimensions of day care have occupied a prominent place in scientific and political debate in Brazil and internationally. This study used an ecological perspective to examine the interconnections surrounding the dimensions of early care and childhood education and the forces that promote or restrain their integration. Information was gathered through interviews with early childhood and child care professionals on study trips to and internships in Western European countries. An ecological model of day care was traced and enlarged through an examination of child care in European, especially Scandinavian, countries. The model was further extended to the context of present-day Brazil to place Brazil in a transition context of common conflicts and challenges. The major findings of the study suggest that when primary socialization of children remains as a family task or is delegated to market forces, the development of integrated child care policies are restrained. When socialization is considered a public task, a more comprehensive approach is pursued. The integration of care and education is directly associated to the interconnectedness of early childhood services and family life. The United Kingdom, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Holland were identified as countries with an extreme tendency to consider child socialization as a private issue. Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, and Portugal compose the middle block and have strengthened the educational dimension of early childhood services. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland express a shared model of responsibility between family and public power, with early childhood services integrated in a more comprehensive social policy. (Contains 112 references.) (KB)

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Paper presented at the 10th European Conference on Quality in Early Childhood Education: Complexity, diversity and multiple perspectives in early childhood. London, 29 August to 1 September, 2000

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Background

In Brazil, as in most western countries, services for young children are in critical shape. Fragmentation, inflexibility, and lack of priority in the public agenda have been the traces in most cases, reflecting negligence in relation to the changes affecting the family and the child in modern society.

The present picture of loss and threats that has characterised the transition of the early childhood services to the educational system in Brazil is an example of lack of definition of a public policy committed toward the needs of children and their families. Perspectives of empowering and expanding these services as well as of unifying their objectives and philosophy are replaced within a context of misunderstanding, prejudice and corporate advantages. This causes an overwhelming number of practical implications such as emphasis on the schooling aspect of day care institutes; negligence regarding the needs for full-time care and provision for the under three; non-acknowledgement of the work accumulated by the welfare system; irresponsibility of the educational system concerning the training of child care workers; segmentation of the services by age ranges: 0 to 3; 4 to 6 years old.

Care and education are dimensions of day care that have occupied a prominent place in scientific and political debate in the last few years in Brazil and internationally. Much is said and proposed regarding the integration between care and education, but the comprehensiveness and practical implications of those concepts still need deeper understanding.

This study is aimed toward contributing to this debate, by shedding light on the complex web of interconnections that surround the dimensions of early

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care and childhood education as well as identifying forces that promote or restrain their integration.

The basic hypothesis defended therefore, is that the effective integration of care and education is directly associated to a joint attention toward the needs of the child and his/her family, a project of construction of a new type of extra-familial care as an expression of sharing responsibility between state and family, and a concept of early childhood institutions as an issue which is simultaneously public and private. In the realm of the implementation of policies and programs, this process demands deep revision and redefinition of the functions, objectives and operation of the institutions that have traditionally assumed the care and education of young children.

This paper is a synthesis of the author's graduation thesis (Haddad, 1997), targeted to build a theoretical model for an integrated system of care and education. By corresponding with Scandinavian and other European child care systems, this study also aimed to confirm and enlarge the main propositions found in the previous study (Haddad, 1991), as follows:

1. The role assigned to the family and women regarding the care of young children constitutes an important ruling element of practices and attitudes, individual or public, related to policies and programs for these young children;
2. The legitimacy of the early childhood institution in the field of the education of young children is directly related to the acknowledgement of both the child's right to be cared for and socialised in a social context broader than the exclusively and strictly familial and the family's right of sharing the care and the education of the child with the state;
3. The acknowledgement of the potentiality of early childhood institutions as a meaningful support system to both the family relationship and the child's development depends on a profound revision of the concepts of childhood, maternity, paternity, family responsibility and role of the state in facing the care, socialisation and education of young children in the context of the modern world.

Theoretical references

The Ecology of Human Development Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1992, 1996; Cochran, 1993) has worked as a basic reference of this study, which presupposes that the analyses of a social phenomenon should take into

consideration the ecological context in which it occurs. In that perspective, the integration between care and education was analysed as a result of an ongoing process of interaction involving direct and indirect forces that affect children in their most meaningful environment, in this case, the early childhood institution and the family. Besides the activities, relations and roles present in the immediate setting of a child's interaction (micro-system), other relevant variables of the ecological context comprise: the relationship between the early-childhood institution and the family and the interconnection among the several settings a child passes through during his/her childhood (meso-system); legislation, policies and forces that regulate and structure day care and the parents' professional world, as well as the social networks of both parents and children (exo-system); and the political, economic and cultural forces that guide public policies of day care, which include, among other items, general culture and societal belief systems related to the social responsibility for the care and education of young children and the acceptance of child- care programs; values and attitudes regarding the participation of women with young children in the labour market, the division of duties between the sexes inside the family, legislation related to parental leave of absence, as well as the educational purposes for the age range(s) and the age of admission of the child in the compulsory school (macro-system).

The forces of the *macrosystem* were also analysed as a combination of causal factors and mediating influences, according to the categories suggested by Cochran (1993) in *The International Handbook of Child Care Policies and Programs*. Demographic, economic, cultural, and social factors, such as the urbanisation and industrialisation, changes in the family structure, birth-rate decline, poverty, labour shortage, are referred to as "causal factors". Cultural values, societal beliefs and norms – traditionally expressed by the family and religion – social-political and economic ideologies; state welfare models; and national wealth comprise the "mediating influences" that "operate as filters, screening out policy and program alternatives that are incompatible with them" (p. 629).

In order to understand the cultural imperatives that promote the development of policies and changes in programs, two of the four universal tensions suggested by Cochran were taken into consideration: *"The importance of the family versus state"; "Child development versus preparation for schooling"*. The first is related to the tension between cultural ideology and political ideology, given that child care policies are

located at the intersection of the family's privacy and public affairs. The second is located between a holistic view of child care as involving the balanced development of all the child's capacities, and the desire to prepare children for the cognitive and social challenges of primary school.

Although the author does not present direct relations between these two tensions, I stated that the emphasis on development or schooling is strongly related to the way early childhood public policies are defined in each society, in facing the responsibility for the socialisation of young children. If the responsibility falls on the family, or is left to the market forces, the state's obligation is removed at this level. Consequently, there is a greater probability of public pre-school prioritising the teaching/learning aspect of education and the admission of older children. If the early-childhood related matters are seen as a social investment for which the whole society is committed to contribute, the probability of the pre-school system covering a wider age range and focus on the whole development of the child is greater, since it is explicitly conceived as an important context of child socialisation.

In that perspective, the socialisation of the young children was considered a key point to analyse the integration between care and education as it works as a link that makes the connection between the isolated elements, giving a dynamic and evolutionary meaning to the whole. The basic idea endorsed herein is that the absence of this dimension in the early-childhood care and education system, as a bonding element, causes rupture upon the whole, resulting in parallel systems and discontinuity among the services. This rupture does not necessary imply the elimination of its components, but a change in the meaning of the early childhood institutions, which emphasis oscillates between care and schooling, disqualifying the broader concept of education.

Methodology

Research methodology comprised mainly of study trips to Western European countries, including the gathering of publications and official documents; interviews with researchers, teacher's trainers, day care workers, and representatives of teacher's unions; and study visits and internships in early childhood institutions and after school centres. The most intensive period of data collection took place in the school year of 1993-94, at the Department of Education of Gothenburg University, Sweden. Electing Sweden as

headquarters, other Scandinavian and Western European countries of were also visited.

During the year of 1995, an exchange program carried out between Denmark and Brazil, was crucial to a more dynamic comprehension of the collection of data. The end of 1995 marks the final period of data collect, which does not contemplate important alterations occurred in Swedish policy, with the transfer of the responsibility from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Science.

Structure of the work

This work is structured in three parts. The **first** gathers the theoretical references regarding the ecological perspective adopted in this study. **Chapter I** presents the ecology of human development of Urie Bronfenbrenner, including its context of origin, the concept of environment, of development, and other relevant aspects to the comprehension of the ecological paradigm. **Chapter II** traces the components of an ecology of day care, emphasising the power of the cultural influences in the development of public policies for young children.

The **second** part deals with the initial model, traced in the previous study (Haddad, 1991). **Chapter III** presents a synthesis of the *Crèche em busca de identidade (The day care centre in search of its identity)*, 'revisiting' the process experienced by the Crèche of Vila Alba, from the prism of the ecological theory. **Chapter IV** identifies the main components of a 'unified model' that are evidenced in this study.

The **third** part deals with the enlargement of the initial model, starting from the data collected abroad. **Chapter V** characterises the Swedish system in its various dimensions: philosophical, legal, political, administrative and pedagogic, with special focus on the teacher's training program. **Chapter VI** places Sweden in the Scandinavian context, having as a goal to reflect upon the existence (or not) of a Scandinavian model of early childhood care and education, by pointing out similarities and dissimilarities among the systems of three countries: Sweden, Denmark and Norway. **Chapter VII** places Scandinavia in the context of the European countries, by presenting a general overview of the EC day care and identifying the main trends in this area. Finally, **Chapter VIII** presents the comprehensive, coherent and integrated system model idealised by Peter Moss and Helen Penn.

Throughout the journey, an ecological model of day care was traced and enlarged, seeking to reflect on the determinants that promote or hinder an integration of care and education. At the end, the reflection is extended to the Brazilian reality, without trying to compare it to the other European countries, but aiming to place Brazil in a transition context of common conflicts and challenges.

It is also worth stressing that the expression model in this case means not a method to be followed, but a set of dynamic elements interrelated that presents its own logic of cause and effects. The basic hypothesis behind such model is that it promotes human development, since it operates in harmony with the real needs, interests and potentialities of children and families in a modern changing society.

Results

Taking into consideration the basic premise that the integration between care and education in the macro level is directly associated to the responsibility for the care and socialisation of the young child, the relative integration found among the analysed countries is related to the assumption of this responsibility as a public or private matter. When the primary socialisation remains as a family task or is delegated to the market forces, the development of unified child care policies are restrained. When it is considered a public task, to be shared with all society, a more comprehensive approach is pursued.

In the level of the implementation of policies and programs, the integration of care and education is directly associated to the interconnectedness of early childhood services and family life. It requires adjustments of the services to the needs of the children and families, in attention to both the parents' world of work and social context, and the interests and competencies of the children. It also means to contribute to the conquests of gender equality, to support and empower the family in its role as parents, and to promote children's learning, social interactions and well-being. Broad objectives, unity of philosophy, universal provision, intersection with other social policies, continuity among the services offered, diversity in terms of types of options, flexibility, and parental involvement are the main traces underlying the unified model of care and education.

In this wider perspective, it is possible to conclude that the early-childhood care and educational institutions lack of coherence in most analysed

countries. As we can see on Table 1, the overlapping of responsibility and age range, fragmentation, differences in objectives, hours of opening, age coverage, funds provision are some of the features that point out disintegration between care and education.

The United Kingdom, Ireland, Luxembourg and Holland are countries with an extreme tendency to undertake the responsibility for the young children as a private issue. In common, those countries share the same state attitude of remaining neutral regarding the offer of measures that conciliate a mother's job and family responsibility; present low rates of coverage for the under three, limiting the offer to children or families considered "in need"; stimulate the admission of children in elementary school before the compulsory age, as of the age of 4, and therefore, present a low expressive pre-school provision.

Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Greek, Italy and Portugal compose the middle block. Those countries have strengthened the educational dimension of early childhood services and have widened meaningfully the rates of coverage for the over-three. Nevertheless, they haven't succeeded to equalise their efforts to the under-three. Although France and Belgium present a higher level of coverage for those, half of the places are taken by the two-year olds on a part-time basis, – as a reflection of the inclusion of this age in the education system, – and the solutions found to conciliate maternal work and caring for the child tend more towards 'adjustments' rather than a structural redefinition of the services offered.

At the other extreme, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland express a shared model of responsibility between family and public power. In those countries, early childhood services are integrated in a more comprehensive social policy, with both social and educational functions; they present the highest level of coverage to the under three, (with exception for Norway whose system had a later development) and more coherence in the system as a whole, characterised by continuity, diversity and flexibility, eliminating the historical difference between day care centre and kindergarten.

The Scandinavian countries seem to have gone one step further regarding the common issue presented in the post-industrial societies, that is, the stress and disadvantages many women and children face due to the bad handling of the relationship between the private world of the family and the public world of their jobs. The welfare model, which guarantees equal rights to all citizens, a comprehensive family support policy, and special attention to the equality of

TABLE 1 Overview of the child care in the European Community and Scandinavian Countries, 1993

Country	PFSS	Age coverage	Age overlapping	Types of institutions /age admitted	Opening hours	Ratio adult/child	Coverage 0-3	Coverage 3-6	Parents contribution	Starting school age	ML + PL in months
Austria	Welfare	0 a 6		Day care center (0-3) Family day care (0-6)	full-time/all year basis	1 per 6-7	3%		yes/value not available	6	24#
				Pre-school (3-6)	part-time, full-time/term basis	1 per 11-12		75%			
E. Germany	Welfare	0 - 6		Day care center (0-3)	full-time/all year basis	?	50%		16% a 20%	6	36#
				Pre-school (3-6)		1 per 18		100%			
W. Germany	Welfare	0 - 6	3 - 6 years	Day care center (0-3); Family day care (0-6)	full-time/all year basis	1 per 5-7	2%		16% a 20%	6	36
	Education	3 to 6		Pre-school (3 - 6)	part-time/term basis (3 to 4h)	1 per 10-14		78%			
Belgium	Welfare	0 - 3	2 1/2 - 3 years	Day care center (0-3); Family day care Familiar (0-6)	full-time/all year basis	1 per 7	30% (-50%)		17 a 30%	6	27*
	Education	2 1/2 - 6		Pre-school (2 1/2-6)	part-time/term basis (3+2h)*	1 per 19		95%	only meal		
Spain	Education	0 - 6		Day care center (0-3); Pre-school (0-6)	full-time/all year basis	1 per 11	2%		20%	6	36
				Pre-school (3-6)	part-time/term basis (3+2h)	1 per 25		64%	no charge		
France	Welfare	0 a 3	2 - 3 years	Day care center (0-3); Family day care (0-3); Halte-garderie (0-6)	full time/all year basis	1 per 6-7	23% (-50%)		23 a 28%	6	36
	Education	2 to 6		Ecole maternelle (2-6)	part-time/term basis (3+3)*	1 per 27		99%	no charge		
Greece	Welfare	0 - 6	3 1/2 - 6 years	Day care center (0-30months); Pre-school (2 1/2-6)	full-time/all year basis	2 per 30	3%		yes/value not available	6	9#
	Education	3 1/2 - 6		Pre-school (3 1/2-6)	part-time/term basis (4h)	1 per 30		70%	no charge		
Netherlands	Welfare	0 - 4		Day care center (0-4); Pre-school (0-4); Playgroup (2-3)	full-time e part-time/all year basis	1 per 11-12	8%		yes/value not available	5 (4)	15#
	Education	4 to 5		Primary school (4-5)	part-time/term basis (3+2h)	?		71%	no charge		
Italy	Welfare	0 - 3		Day care center (0-3); integrated services (0-6)	full-time/all year basis; flexible	1 per 6	6%		10 a 20%	6	9*#
	Education	3 to 6		Pre-school (3-6)	part-time/term basis (5 to 10h)	5 per 25-28		91%	only meal		
Ireland	Welfare	0 - 5	3 - 5 years	Day care center (0-5); Playgroup (3-6)	full time/all year basis	1 per 5	2% (-70%)		small fee	6 (4-5)	3*#
	Education	3 to 5		Pre-school (2-6); Primary school (4-5)	part-time/term basis (2 1/2h; 4:30h)	2 per 15;1 per 35		55%	no charge		
Luxembourg	Welfare	0 to 4		Day care center (0-3); Kindergarten (2-3); Preschool (4-12); Fam. day care (0-3)	full-time/all year basis	1 per 6-7	?		yes/value not available	4	8
	Education	4 to 5		Primary school(4-5)	part-time/term basis	1 per 18		100%	no charge		
Portugal	Welfare	0 -6	3 - 6 years	Day care center (0-3); Preschool (3-6); integrat. center (0-6); Fam. day care (0-3)	full-time/all year basis	1 per 7	12%		yes/value not available	6	27#
	Education	3 to 6		Pre-school (3-6)	part-time/term basis (3+2h)	1 per 25		48%	no charge		
UK		0 - 5	3 - 5 years	Day care center (0-5); Family center (0-5); Playgroup (2-5)	mixed part-time/full time	1 per 5	2%		yes/value not available	5 (6)	7*#
	Education	3 to 5		Pre-school (3-5); Primary school (4)	part-time term basis (2:30h; 4:30h)	2 per 26;1 per 30		60%	no charge		
Denmark	Welfare	0 - 7		Day care center (0-3); Pre-school (3-6); integrated center (0-6)	full-time/all year basis	1 per 3	48%		20%	7	30
				Family Day care (0-3)		1 per 6		82%			
Finland	Welfare	0 - 7		Day care center (0-7); Family day care (0-7)	full-time and part-time/all year basis	1 per 5-6	21%		15%	7	16
								53%			
Sweden	Welfare	0 - 7		Day care center (0-7); Family day care (0-7)	full-time/all year basis	1 per 7	33%		13%	7 (6)	18
				Pre-school (5-7); Open preschool	part-time/term basis	2 per 20		72%	no charge		
Norway 1991	Welfare	0 - 7		Day care center (0-7); Family day care (0-3)	part-time and full-time/all year basis	?	13%		20%	7	14
				Pre-school (5-7)		?		34%	no charge		

Source: European Commission Network on Childcare, 1996; Be,1993.

Key to Table:

* = No Parental Leave

\# = No Paternity Leave

PFSS = Publicly-funded subsided system

ML = Maternity Leave

PL = Parental Leave

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opportunities and rights between men and women are found as the main mediate influences determining the success of the integration between care and education.

Final considerations

As it was above mentioned, the core of this work was the construction of a unified model of early-childhood care and education, starting from the premises raised in my previous study, which had a public day care centre of São Paulo city, as its main reference. The fact of connections among ideologies, policies and practices found in the micro universe of the first study have met correspondence with the macro universe of systems of other countries confirm the existence of general laws which are dealt with by the adopted paradigm. Still, the fact of the found correspondence having been with systems of countries oriented by a social-democratic philosophy, such as the Scandinavian countries, makes one think that certain components of the ecological theory of human development, pointed out as crucial to the achievement of a unified system of care and education, are taken into consideration in the political model of those countries, and, in fact, seem to lead to the promotion of human development in various spheres of life.

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